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guardian rather than the servant of a master. He is, like a member of the family, fed and clothed, but never remunerated; his position is not a 357 736
derogatory one. He owns his own property, but his taxes may be paid for him, and he receives cattle as *mooyeadi* (bride-price). His services are essentially voluntary; he participates in all social activities and has no political disabilities.

Rather like the *malada* was the *murwian* (*ba rwa*, to rear cattle or other 735
animals). He was a poor re . . aken in by the family as a hanger-on, was 178
given land, and was helped just as if he were a member of the family. If he was an orphan bachelor, related to the family, he usually married one of its daughters; but he was not bound to the family and could leave whenever he wished. This institution is practically extinct to-day, as is also *ba pafa* (or *ba sigula*), to work for food. In the old days, a man or 437
woman, short of maize towards the end of the year, would hire out his services; but the work was considered irksome and the worker 'a fool who feeds himself by his labours'. The work is difficult for, 'tired though he be, he must work until the digger of the field is also tired'. *Ho sigula* is spoken of especially when a bachelor, with no sister from whose marriage he could expect the cattle for his marriage, sold his services for hoes and cattle; usually his mother assisted him; and often he carried iron ore from the north to the local smiths, so that it used to be said 'the great road helps bachelors (who have no sisters) to marry the sisters of young men'.

Ho hira (from the Afrikaans *huur*, hire), the hiring out of one's services 468
or implements, is practically confined to Christians; it is a new conception. 426
But pagans who have money or dislike the unreliability of a *khilichi* arrangement sometimes engage the services or hire the implements or cattle of others. The standard payment is 10*s.* per acre ploughed. The [468]
advantages are that one can insist upon a certain degree of thoroughness in the work and dictate the time of ploughing. In the old days implements were borrowed (*ba adima*); but even *ba adima*, if it is of things falling definitely within the European pattern, nowadays involves the passing of some consideration, especially among Christians. The typical instance is the loan of a boar, which must be returned with one of the litter. But the loan of animals or implements of the traditional economy, such as cattle, goats, or pots, is always gratuitous; even when a herdboy is lent, one must expect only 'thanks', which is generally sent with some beer. Only the utmost care of the thing, not payment, is expected of the borrower, for 'when I, who am a borrower, turn round (to face the lender), I fear to be caught in the thorn tree'. There is an ill-defined 855
custom whereby, when a relative, usually the mother's mother or the 431
mother's brother, cares for (*ba lela*) a child for many years, he is given a head of cattle, called the *malada*. This is hardly a reward for services; it is a gesture of goodwill, is entirely voluntary, and is rarely paid.

When cattle are placed in the care of another (*ba fisa*) no consideration 231
passes; the person to whom the cattle are entrusted, the *mafisa*, uses the 465
cattle and their milk; but his use is precarious, for 'he scans the road even as he milks' since the owner may at any moment come to take back his cattle. Occasionally when goats are cared for, the herdboy is given a

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578 unmanageable complication arises, unless there is agreement between all the persons interested: the son to whom the cattle should have been allotted, the daughter from whose marriage they came, the house established by these cattle, and the father himself. Tensions arise in many other ways: neglect of one wife and favouritism of another in respect of economic services, interference with the independence of the houses, and so on. Unwillingness to co-operate in the home and in fulfilling the wider group obligations is a more potent cause of trouble than adultery; and witchcraft, except as a symptom of tensions otherwise created, takes a minor place; and neither adultery nor witchcraft as such can snap the *mavyualo* bonds.

426 595 684 The character of these tensions may be briefly illustrated by the case of Muvirwa and Mara. Faced with starvation, Mara obtained cattle from Muvirwa (who was a friend, not a relative), promising, in accordance with the 'mud-stamper' institution, a daughter in exchange. In fact, this daughter, the little 'mud-stamper', as she is called, because she is too young to stamp mealies, was not yet in existence. That is not unusual in these transactions, which require that the 'mud-stamper' shall in due course be given gratuitously to the benefactor; and thereby the two lineages become cattle-linked, so that, for instance, Mara and his descendants would have to offer brides and receive cattle and Muvirwa and his descendants would offer cattle and receive brides. If Mara had no brides to offer, Muvirwa would still have to give cattle; otherwise the link might be broken. The 'mud-stamper', after reaching years of discretion, may dislike the benefactor, who is usually already old and decrepit, and that may lead to conflicts. In this instance, when Mara's daughter entered her *khoba* initiation, Muvirwa, as is customary, paid the *lovalo* goat, for a bridegroom for whom a bride is 'born' must, so to speak, nurse her and 'grow' her. Not long afterwards the 'mud-stamper' died. Mara offered another daughter and, as the girl had died before actual marriage, no further *mavyualo* was required from Muvirwa. But the substitute, having grown up, married and then deserted Muvirwa, who was already very old; she ran away to a lover, Mara himself conniving at the desertion. Mara returned some cattle to Muvirwa, thereby severing the relationship, and promised the balance when the lover had paid *mavyualo*.

684 Years passed and nothing happened. Muvirwa eventually brought an action, which Magaebia, Mara's wife, contested. She said that on the death of the 'mud-stamper' she had offered to return the cattle, but this was refused, that the substitute was forced to marry Muvirwa against her will, and that the religious ceremony was omitted. Muvirwa replied that he had already received seventeen of the twenty-four cattle (the number to which the original eight had increased), that *it* was thus not he who had broken the relationship, and that the religious ceremony, which for various reasons could not be held in Mara's village, had taken place at the village of Magaebia's brother. The court could not but side with Mara, but it tried hard to reduce his claim, for twenty-four cattle, it said, were an enormous number. Then recriminations broke out between Mara and his wife, which revealed a many-sided conflict in the

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mother's brother's daughter, and in contrast to all surrounding Sotho tribes, Pedi to the south and Highveld tribes to the west where it is common, marriage with the father's brother's daughter is not considered possible. Cross-cousin marriage with the father's sister's daughter is known only among the Lobedu, where it is common within the royal clan, Khaha, where it is rare, and Mokia's Venda. The prevalence of marriage with the mother's brother's daughter by which a girl is said to be 'born for' a son of a certain house and knows all her life she will marry there, has been a stabilizing influence leading to very much less illegitimacy resulting from the absence in towns of young men than is found in other areas where this type of marriage has broken down. A girl knows she will have to 'cook for' her father's sister, her future mother-in-law (indeed there is a definite moral value attached to this), and even in the absence of her husband-to-be will be married by the family. If, as a young married woman she has a child in the absence of her husband, it is an irregularity without serious social consequences. On the death of a spouse, sororate and levirate are common; marriage with the wife's brother's daughter is found where the wife is barren or dead, and full inheritance of a young wife of one's own father is quite common.

The custom of a woman being 'married' by a woman, so common in the Lowveld, is one often misunderstood by Europeans. Since a girl is 'born for' the son of her father's sister whose cattle made her father's marriage and her own birth possible, her father's sister may, even if she has no son, nevertheless 'marry' the girl, who will come and cook for her and have children by some appointed relative or by private lovers of her own choice. It is possible, though much rarer, for a woman rich in cattle to 'marry' a non-relative.

Though in the Lowveld as elsewhere the person responsible for payment of bride-price in a man's first marriage is his father or guardian and brothers and sisters are usually coupled, the cattle for the girl being used by the boy, it is not customary in the Lowveld, as is the case elsewhere, for any other relative to contribute. Here, when a man has no cattle, instead of begging from various relatives, he will proceed to 'show the knee' to a man rich in cattle, i.e., he will borrow cattle on the understanding that his first daughter will

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583 be handed over to the lender to become, in most cases, the wife of
[424] his son. To-day this custom is not as common as it used to be, owing to the fact that girls now often resist such a marriage, knowing that the European authorities will support them. No cattle or presents from the girl's people are ever handed over in marriage, and there is therefore nothing corresponding to the Zulu-Xhosa *ukuba*. But there is all over the Lowveld a special name and function associated with each beast and goat that is handed over, which, together with the fact that there is generally no fixed number, no organized bargaining, such as that which characterizes Pedi procedure, and that very few people complete payment of bride-price before marriage, illustrate the non-commercial character of this arrangement.

585 The most characteristic feature of marriage ceremonial in the Lowveld is the slow and tedious procession from the girl's to the boy's home, the bridal party having to be persuaded to move at each step by means of gifts, till finally on reaching their destination they have to be carried in on the backs of women from the boy's home, weeping loudly in their distress. There is no central marriage feast, though a goat is killed for the girls who accompany the bride, and no one from the girl's home, except for the bridesmaids, is present. The brilliant competitive dancing displays, mutual vituperations between the two families and general feasting which form part of Nguni marriage ceremonial, all are conspicuously absent in this area where the arrival of a bride hardly disturbs the even tenor of everyday life. It is of common occurrence for a bride, before arrival at her husband's kraal, to be taken to the village of the sister whose cattle the husband has used in the marriage. The sister must see the woman who will bear a wife for her son and will kill a goat in her honour. Blood-mixing ceremonies between bride and bridegroom to eliminate all dangers of sex intercourse are common over the whole area.

586 Barrenness and adultery are not grounds for divorce, though when a woman is barren her parents generally offer her sister, for whom, however, cattle must again be handed over. A peculiar feature of divorce in the Lowveld to-day is that the husband almost always keeps both the children and the cattle, except in rare cases where it can be proved that he has wrongfully driven away his wife, when he receives neither children nor cattle.